

JOHN BECK HOME SCROOGE AND MARLEY'S

Constructed: 1867

Address: 791 North 100 East

Present owners: Donna/Marlin Barnes

Few men had the impact on early Lehi that John Beck did. Born in the town of Aichelberg in Wurttemberg, Germany, on March 19, 1843, Beck had a life-long zest for the business world. At age fourteen he left home for Stuttgart, where he found employment at the Cafe Marquardt, and resolved to learn the hotel business. To acquaint himself with the various methods in vogue he became fluent in French, German and Italian.

In 1860, he moved to the French part of Switzerland to continue his language studies. He joined the Mormon Church in Switzerland in 1861 and returned to Germany as a missionary, where he converted most of his family members. In May of 1864 he left Europe for America, arriving in Lehi late that fall.

In the spring of 1865 he moved to Richfield to farm but was forced to return to Lehi a year later when the Black Hawk War broke out. Young Beck, and his bride Sarah, settled in Lehi because of the influence of another German immigrant, John Conrad Naile (a.k.a. Naegle), who then owned the Warm Springs (Saratoga) near the mouth of the Jordan River.

Beck leased the site from Naile and raised sheep and manufactured charcoal there. In one year he accumulated sufficient capital to build a large, two story adobe home, still standing at 791 First East, where he lived for many years.

In 1870 Beck purchased an interest in a mine in the Tintic District. He spent \$6,000 in developing the property, but lost everything through litigation. Undaunted, he continued to prospect in the area. One day while examining a rock outcropping, he thought he saw promise. He posted a claim which caused locals to call him the "crazy Dutchman." They insisted that there was no ore in Eureka gulch, where he had placed his stake. The mine, ultimately, became the

fabled Bullion Beck and Champion Mine, which paid millions in dividends to stockholders and made Beck, and many others, wealthy. ultimately Beck died poor, losing several fortunes during his long and busy life. His own account of his financial ebb and flows states he placed “too much confidence in his fellowmen and became the victim of unscrupulous persons who ruined him financially.”

In 1882 Beck constructed a large sixty-nine-by-thirty-six foot rock barn on his property at 653 North First East. Initially the structure was leased to Wells, Fargo, & Co. But as soon as Lehi’s liquor ordinance was changed in 1890, Beck and his brother George, sons of a German winegrower, established a cider mill and wine press in the fortress-like building. Hundreds of apple trees were planted on Beck’s extensive property--bounded by Center/First East and State/Sixth North. The entire hill, except the Central School property and Beck’s home and rock barn, was one large orchard.

Beck’s extensive nearby vineyards covered twenty acres between the Union Pacific tracks and the cemetery. An 1898 local prohibition ordinance, however, brought an end to Beck’s industry.

Beck was also the original developer of Saratoga Springs resort southwest of Lehi. In 1884 the entrepreneur bought more than one thousand acres of land surrounding the warm springs. He named the acreage immediately surrounding the springs “Beck’s Saratoga Springs.”

In 1890 Beck leased his Lehi home to local dentist E.C. Merrihew and moved to Salt Lake City where he eventually owned five homes (one for each of his plural wives.)

Beck died on 2 April 1913, brought to his death by a small cut from a nail in his shoe. Blood poisoning set in, doctors amputated the great toe on his left foot. The shock was too great, however, and he died shortly afterwards.

The Beck Rock Barn, long a Lehi landmark, was demolished several years ago. But the Beck home, which was owned by the Strasburg family for nearly seven decades, is now Scrooge and Marley’s, a fine gift shop owned by Donna and Marlin Barnes.